(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Indians in jails of Nepal

2519. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in Nepal, more than 300 Indians are in their prisons, many of them being innocent as there is no evidence against them;

(b) if so, whether through our Embassy, Government would take up the matter with appropriate authorities in Nepal, to seek earlier trial of such accused, so that innocent Indian nationals do not continue to languish in Nepalese prisons; and

(c) the number of Indian women who are incarcerated in Nepal?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) As on 1.6.07.2007, there were 339 Indian nationals in various prisons in Nepal, arrested on charges related to violation of local laws. As and when any information is received about innocent Indians being imprisoned, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu maintains a close contact with concerned authorities in Nepal to expedite the trial.

(c) As on 16.07.2007, there were two Indian women imprisoned in Nepal.

Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal

2520. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 123 Agreement of the India-US civilian nuclear deal has ignored vital interests and increased dependence on the US;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard;

(c) the financial viability of the entire Agreement and the total cost benefit; and

(d) whether Government are aware of the Left's objection *i.e.* Government to desist from proceeding with the negotiation for the 123 Agreement until the inimical provisions of the Hyde Act are cleared out of the way?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No. Prime Minister in his statement in the Parliament on 13 August, 2007 has made it clear that in concluding this agreement the Government have ensured that the autonomy of strategic programme is fully maintained and that the Agreement in no way curtails, inhibits or restricts our strategic autonomy or capabilities. Our rights to pursue our three-stage nuclear programme remain undiluted.

(c) As the Agreement is not a commercial contract, it is not possible to calculate its financial viability or total cost-benefit. However, the Agreement would certainly